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# UNITY

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RANDALL S. HILTON, *Editor*

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**JAMES PETER WARBASSE**—“On Belief and Hope”—1866-1957, was a noted surgeon, author, lecturer, and leader in the Cooperative Movement. He died at his home, “Solheim,” in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, last February 22.

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## Editorial Comments

HE nations are "preparing for war like precocious giants and for peace like retarded pygmies." These words of the Honorable Lester Pearson, on the occasion of his receiving the Nobel Peace Award, are so true as to be almost an understatement. In America the shouting of "preparedness for war" is so loud that the voices speaking for peace seem but a whisper. Of the vacillating and often contradictory pronouncements of the Soviet Union, the shrieking tones of daring and defiance drown out the murmurs of conciliation. Neither the fickleness of the Soviet Union nor the stubborn rigidity of the United States is worthy of rational, reasonable, peace-seeking nations. It is to be hoped that the leadership of the United States and the Soviet Union will come to its senses and make a real effort to discover and understand the legitimate concerns of each other and, wherein they conflict, strive to resolve them. It is not necessary either to capitulate or to humiliate in order to negotiate.

win R. Murrow, Eric Severeid, and their associates on CBS. The idea which kept coming to mind as we watched and listened to men stationed at advantageous listening posts around the world was why is it that, with such talented observers and analysts available for information and advice, our State Department "goofs" so many times. There was a consistency in the reports of all three groups, a similarity of analysis and a surprising agreement on what our course of action should be. One cannot help but wonder whether our ambassadors, attachés, and counsellors are protected from reality or whether their observations and reports are colored by a pre-determined policy to which they try to fit the facts. From its actions, it would seem that our State Department was not adequately informed or that it chose not to recognize some of the world's primary realities.

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What about Humanism? This was the concern of an article in the Christmas issue of the *Unitarian Christian*. The author, Rev. Kenneth R. Warren of Barnstable, Massachusetts, thinks that the average Unitarian is a theist and that he has a problem. The problem

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We listened to the year-end reports of CBS, NBC, and ABC. We were especially impressed with Ed-

is that of being "uneasy" about having humanists "in the same church and in the same denomination." This uneasiness of the hypothetical average Unitarian theist is confounded daily by the harmonious relations existing between many, many Unitarian theists and Unitarian humanists. Mr. Warren's problem, however, is how to maintain Unitarian freedom of belief and at the same time have all Unitarians be theists. He resolves his dilemma by implying a second-class membership to humanists. They can be members but should not be elected to any important church or denominational office. There is a further implication to the effect that theists who vote for humanists or cooperate with them when elected are some kind of traitor to God.

Mr. Warren recognizes that there are divers kinds of humanists. He does not state any recognition of any comparable diversity among theists. But there are wide differences among theists. It is our observation from a rather intimate knowledge of the Unitarian movement that the naturalistic theists are the majority among theists and that they have much more in common with the religious humanists than they do with the Christian theists who stand perilously close to the brink of supernaturalism.

The great Christian commandment is to love God and thy neighbor as thyself. The article demonstrates an admirable devotion to the love of God but a limited love for humanist neighbors.

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James Peter Warbasse was first known to your editor as "the grand old man of the cooperative movement." Great as his contribution was in this area we learned that his contributions to fields of medicine and surgery were equally great. Until the late 1920s he was known as the Surgeon, also as Professor, Editor, Lecturer, and Textbook Writer for medicine and surgery. His career in economics through the cooperatives came later and was the natural outgrowth of the same idealism that led him into medicine. He was interested in and devoted to people, to the welfare of individuals as physical beings and as consumers. His statement of beliefs and hopes, printed in this issue of **UNITY**, was written at the age of ninety. They are an inspiring guide to those of us who are living in these exciting and challenging times. Dr. Warbasse died last year in the ninety-second year of his life, leaving behind him a monument of progress in Human Welfare.

# On Belief and Hope

JAMES PETER WARBASSE

IFE is made interesting and also difficult by uncertainties and the unexpected. I have always believed in being prepared for these contingencies. To be suddenly confronted by a situation, to which one has given no thought and for which he is unprepared, may be embarrassing—or indeed hazardous. Since maturity began, I have always had in mind certain standards of conduct, ideals, and conclusions, arrived at through trial and experience, and established as precepts for my guidance in all encounters—well thought out, and preserved in the pockets of memory. They are the tried and dependable companions of life.

I have always advised youth to be prepared beforehand for emergencies. When a temptation presents itself, in the presence of emotional pressures, that is not the time to make the decision. That is too late. The situation should already have been visualized, analyzed, and evaluated deliberately in moments of calm thoughtfulness, and the conclusion determined. The course of action should not be left to the moment of the event. When the moment arrives, memory should come to

the rescue. The course of action should already have been determined. No new decision needs to be made. Decisions now are ready for application. The best time to use the intelligence is not when emotion is in action. The only intelligence that is then needed is to respect the intelligence that solved the situation when the intelligence was wholly in command. Thinking is a delicate process, and the best time to practice it is when undisturbed thoughtfulness prevails.

It is well to add to the products of calm deliberation ideas that have come out of the hot chaldron of action, but the best time to add them is not while the chaldron is boiling. Let us not be fooled by the doctrine that the occasion creates the means to be used. To slay the dragons of today requires the sword that was hammered out on the anvil of yesterday.

Here are some of the cogent beliefs and hopes to which I have given thought. They are put down not for the purpose of guiding others, but because they have served me.

Being in health of body and mind, in this ninetieth year of my age, I assert my belief in truth,

in kindness, in beauty, and in deeds—for the virtues come to nothing unless confirmed by action.

I believe the adoption of that course of life which is the most virtuous, as it becomes a habit, will be found to be the most agreeable.

I believe the cultivation of virtues should prompt the virtuous to see to it that their virtues impinge upon and affect other individuals to their advantage; for isolated virtue is sterile.

I believe the dark realm, represented by the unknown, is neither sacred nor adorable, but is a challenge to man's curiosity and to his capacity to search for new information.

I believe, as time goes on, science will shed more and more light upon this realm of mystery and darkness, and its ghostly inhabitants will continue to disappear.

I believe man does himself incalculable harm by looking to extra-natural forces for help, when in need, rather than making use of his own abilities.

I believe I know more than my ancestors; and I believe that much they believed was not true—which prompts me to be as sure as possible that my own beliefs rest upon substantial grounds that will bear the scrutiny of time.

I believe in the continuous expansion of knowledge and under-

standing, for I have seen the light illuminate the distant turrets of the future.

I believe the sun will rise in the morning, the tides will ebb and flow, flowers will bloom in the spring, and the phenomena of nature will go on as of yore.

I believe the grain that nourishes and the sun that warms, the volcano that kills and the hurricane that destroys, are caused by the forces of nature that operate in all things, and inspire man to meet them and to control them to his own good and woe.

I believe the war that murders, the airplane that crashes, and the hospital that burns are earthly affairs due to man's inefficiency, injustice, and greed; and the responsibility should rest squarely on him.

I believe mankind needs the emotions, for science cannot supply the fineness that music, poetry, and the beauties of color and form engender.

I believe in plan and purpose; but since plan and purpose imply thinking, I have no conception of plan and purpose excepting such as emanate from the brain; and such functions of the brain, I believe, are physiological and occur only in an organ of nerve cells and nerve fibers.

I believe happiness is best attained by health of body and of mind, by efficiency directed to

definite goals in the interest of one's own well-being, by the love of truth, by acting in kindness, by creating beauty, and by doing what is needed to implement these virtues.

I believe to walk uprightly and to live justly toward all men are the companions of happiness, that to be generous and charitable are requirements, without which the highest degree of happiness is impossible.

I believe these virtues best promote self-interest, which is the great goal, and that the virtuous are, in general, the most successful and the happiest.

I believe, as old age approaches, the knowledge of a life that has exemplified these self-interests can be the supreme comfort, and to have won a life of happiness by such practices is the consummate climax.

I believe that the physical constituents of my body are indestructible and endure forever, that my children and grandchildren can perpetuate my living substance as long as mankind survives, that the influence I have had on material things and the changes I have wrought in them endure beyond my life, and that the impact of my character upon other human beings expands and passes on from one to another while man exists.

These are my beliefs. I also

have hopes.

I hope cooperation and brotherly sympathy among men may displace the struggle to overcome men.

I hope the movement toward a better life will continue until all have abundance.

I hope for the conquest of unnecessary pain and disease until man lives out his life in comfort.

I hope that freedom from superstition and mysticism will continue to advance till man has freed himself and depends on his own reasoning and his own responsibility for his fate.

I hope that my mind and memory will always cherish the beauties and the grandeur of this earth, of its people and its products.

I hope I may be spared the degenerative processes which might affect my mind and spoil my capacity to see naturally and to think scientifically.

I hope to remain alive while still living, and to find happiness in the enjoyment of truth, beauty, kindness, and in useful action.

I hope I shall never persuade myself to believe what is unreal because it is pleasant to believe.

I hope that as my hour of death approaches, I shall enjoy consciousness until the end, be free of pain, and enter into eternal sleep, aware that what I have started still goes on.

I hope I may have the satisfac-

tion of observing the fading of function, and consciously take leave of life with intelligent resignation, viewing this event with equanimity and with the satisfaction I have always enjoyed in

laying myself down to sleep when tired at the day's end. Since I have no fear of death, or of an ominous hereafter, I hope to live to experience death as a beneficent and great adventure.

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## Don't Fence Religion In!

PETER H. SAMSOM

**C**ONE OF the powerful realities with which free religion has to contend in any age is the tendency of religion to narrow itself down to a formula of fixed beliefs or a set of routine rituals. Historians of religion tell us that every religion tends, with the passing of time, to narrow its vision, to pull in its horizons, and to harden its thinking into fixed beliefs that grow extremely resistant to change. This same tendency to build fences can be seen at work in the attitude of the public toward the religions in its midst.

All of us, orthodox and liberal alike, are subject to the spiritual law well-stated by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The spirit buildeth herself a house; then the house becometh a prison for the spirit." The aspect of this that especially concerns religious liberals is the tendency to narrow the scope of religion itself and limit its field to

a certain definite pasture. This is happening aggressively in our day, and wherever it occurs religious liberals must proclaim and defend the spirit's liberty. "Don't fence religion in!" can be a rallying-call to summon freedom-loving men and women of whatever affiliation who remember that their own religion was once—and may still be—a burst of the spirit releasing men from some bondage, some faith grown rigid.

There are forces at work today seeking to fence religion in. They are not the work of evil men, but of good men who are following the logic of their own traditional faith, who believe that they are defending "true religion" by so doing. Often they feel that they are clarifying religion in general for the rest of us by seeking to fence it in and delimit it to some one special area. The most dramatic instance of this tendency at the moment is affecting our friends

of the Ethical Culture movement. A ruling was made recently in a Washington, D.C. tax court to the effect that the local Ethical Society is not a "religious" organization.

You may well ask: Since when have tax courts been handing down definitions of religion? This odd circumstance came about when the Washington Ethical Society applied for the usual property tax exemption that is given to all institutions of religion. The court held that this society is not entitled to tax exemption for its building as an institution of religion, because the Ethical Society's faith does not include "belief in and worship of any personal God or Supreme Being or beings." Therefore, it is not a religion. [This decision was reversed by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. This settles the matter as far as the Washington Ethical Society is concerned but it does not resolve the basic problem with which Mr. Samsom is dealing. It just keeps the door ajar.—Ed.]

We are not concerned at the moment with the tax exemption aspect of this case, though it does raise some interesting questions for liberal religion that believes in the separation of Church and State. It is the broader implication of this ruling that interests us more, for all religious move-

ments of liberal and independent spirit that get along without creeds are involved by implication. If the Ethical Society is denied the right to consider itself a form of religion, what about other non-creedal, non-theistic movements that think of themselves as religious even though they require no theological profession of faith of their members, and insist on no definite belief in any supreme being, leaving such matters to the individual conscience and reason?

After more than three-fourths of a century of honorable activity, widely accepted as a religious movement, the Ethical Culture Societies in America are now being challenged as to their religious character. The assessor in Washington expressed neatly the spirit of this challenge: "I don't care what the religion is, it must start out with a belief in a supreme being." How arrogant this must sound to thousands of people, inside and outside the Ethical Society, who respect this movement as one of the highest-minded forms of religion in America! When this ruling was announced, Alan Barth wrote a forthright editorial in the *Washington Post*, in which he pointed out that the Ethical Societies have many of the attributes of the more conventional religions:

Their leaders are ordained, and perform the usual duties

of clergymen, including the solemnization of marriages. Their Sunday morning services are spiritual in character. The Society seeks the ennoblement of its members and the betterment of society. Its central purpose, in common with the purposes of other churches, is to promote the knowledge, love, and practice of right living in all the relations of life, to join its members into a religious and educational fellowship in the effort to advance the moral growth of humanity through study, social action and spiritual consecration.

I am sure there are countless people in our land who belong to no church, who profess no traditional creed or even any particular belief in God, but who would resent the suggestion that, because they have no theological belief, their way of life and their thinking are not religious. This is a day when much of religion is aggressively God-centered. It is a day when a university professor may be discharged from his post because he does not believe in a Supreme Being. In this day, the words "under God" have been artificially inserted into the national pledge of allegiance. In such a day, the danger is that we shall equate religion itself with belief in God, that we shall define

religion itself as the worship of a Supreme Being—as the dictionary unfortunately does. This does describe a good deal of what people think of as religion. But the harmful consequence of such thinking is to exclude from the area of religion those forms of faith that do not base their pursuit of the good life on a formal belief in a Deity.

We encounter the force of this tendency in other curious ways. Consider the case of the conscientious objector. During World War II, it became evident that our national attitude toward the C.O. had undergone some change since the first World War. The man who had religious scruples about the taking of human life was ignored in those days, and his claimed right of conscience was brushed aside in the heat of wartime emotion. There followed, however, a whole generation of pacifist feeling and teaching, and by the time of World War II, provision had been made for the recognition of the C.O. as one who was exercising a legitimate right of conscience. Thousands of men declared themselves conscientiously and religiously opposed to killing, upon the authority of their churches' teachings, and they were allowed to engage in non-combatant forms of military service such as medical corps work, or in civilian public service

work under non-military administration.

Some tricky problems were raised by this national step toward the honoring of private conscience in a time of national emergency. One of these problems was this matter of religion and its part in the man's decision. When was the man's objection to war religious, and when was it not? There had to be some kind of standard by which the individual's profession of conscience was measured. His objection had to be sincere, a matter of genuine conscience, and character witnesses had to testify that he was of responsible moral character, and not merely dodging the draft or looking for a soft touch.

But evidence of conscientious objection itself was not enough to qualify a man as a conscientious objector. The government held that the reason for his inner conviction against war had to be a religious reason, and here the difficulty began for many men. Inevitably, a narrow construction was placed upon what was "religious," and what was not. The matter soon boiled down to whether or not a man believed in a God who required of him not to kill. The majority of C.O.'s in the second World War had no trouble with this, as they were members of such sects as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of the

Brethren, the Mennonites, or the Society of Friends — historic "peace" churches, with generally orthodox theology undergirding their ethical codes. But C.O.'s who happened to be Unitarians, Universalists, Ethical Culturists, humanists, agnostics, atheists or simply philosophical objectors to war—these men did have trouble, and many were refused recognition as C.O.'s not because their objection was insincere, but because their ethical objection to killing another human being was not "religious," that is, not tied in with the belief in a Supreme Being who laid this course of conduct upon them as a divine command. Or, they were refused simply because their often unorthodox conceptions of God did not satisfy Selective Service.

It is all-important that we see past the incidentals of these events to their essence, so far as we are here concerned. Regardless of the other interesting questions involved in the two matters we have mentioned, the thing we must be vitally concerned over is that in each case, *religion is being fenced in*. It is being delimited by barriers that are not the essential boundaries of religion, broadly considered. No single one of us has any business settling boundaries around what our fellowman believes in and cherishes as religion to him. The simple test of

this truth is to ask oneself: would we allow anyone to do this to us?

A humanist group in California has recently been denied equal status before the law in respect to tax-exemption, because its tenets as a "Fellowship of Humanity" do not include a belief in a deity. Again, the law is held to mean that religion requires worship, and worship is held to require belief in God. In Ontario, the same thing recently happened to a Theosophical Society, on the grounds that it was not using its building for the worship of "a recognized deity." The word theosophy itself means divine wisdom—but because the object of reverence the theosophists have is not a "recognized" deity, because these people do not conceive of God as do Methodists or Catholics, there is not a religion!

This kind of thing is just plain indecent! It sets certain people up as judges of the innermost beliefs and deepest feelings of their fellowmen. It erects an arbitrary standard of which God is approvable and which God is outcast, which belief is religious and which is not religious. Even worse, it has the crust to dogmatize that all religion has to conform to one pattern—the pattern in which people direct their reverence to a deity. The logic of this sort of thing is simply that you cannot consider yourself religious

unless you are like the majority of other people in the way you believe.

According to this impossible logic, if you want the right to serve your country and humanity in ways other than those which violate your deepest convictions, you cannot have this right unless you derive your ideal of life from the same source from which most "religious" people think they derive theirs, namely, a supernatural source. If you want minimum recognition for your church, for your society or fellowship in which you find your spiritual satisfaction, your moral ideal, and your encouragement to living a good life, you are liable at any time to have to demonstrate that all of these spiritual values flow from a formal belief in a recognized deity. Not only is this indecent; it is undemocratic and un-American, and certainly is destructive of the free and growing spirit in religion. It builds a fence around religion that shuts out some of the most vital ideals and movements of our time and of any time.

Once, Virginia held that the only true religion was Episcopalianism. Once, Massachusetts held that the one true faith was Congregationalism. We have come a long way from these cozy provincialisms through the evolving of our American democracy, in

which all faiths stand on an equal footing before the law. But in the twentieth century, is the one true religion to be considered to be supernatural theism? Is religion to be equated with a worshipping of a Supreme Being, and limited to this?

Today, by the God-centered view of what religion is, we would have to rule Buddhism out of consideration as a religion, for Buddhism has no God, though it does have Nirvana as the state of blessedness, and a way of life by which men may move toward it. By this fenced-in concept of religion, we would have to hold that Confucianism is not religious in spirit, since its code of conduct is not derived from a feeling of duty to a deity. By this view of religion, we would have to question the religious status of a long succession of philosophers, teachers, humanitarians, and reformers who have blessed and bettered the human race. For by this narrow interpretation of religion, these men's devotion to mankind, to science, to art, and to advancing and enhancing the quality of life on earth would all have to have been derived from a belief in God, and not all of these servants of humanity could meet that qualification.

In our free society, we must leave room for those who seek to broaden the meaning of religion

from what it has meant in the past. Again, let us keep our eye on the main issue. We are not suggesting that believing in God is wrong, or any such preposterous thing. We are not arguing against believing in a Supreme Being. This happens to be the dominant form religion has taken in the Western world. We are insisting, however, that belief in God, popular as it is, is but one of a number of varieties of religion, and is not the only foundation upon which effective and honest religion can be built. We are saying that, while belief in God provides for countless people a soul-satisfying and persuasive reason for living a good life, there are also people who find it possible to live such a life with no reference whatever to any concept of deity. And there are some who find it necessary to their intellectual integrity to conduct their thinking and living without bringing in any such concept. All these varieties of thought and belief must be accorded the same freedom and respect that are given to conventional religious faith.

In a recent review of an anthology of modern poetry, I read these words:

The editor wisely casts a wide net into American poetry of the last fifty years—a net, moreover, in which the meshes are not too coarse and not too

fine. He does not draw back from talents that are small but pure . . . there is nothing routine, or formal about his choice. The experimentalists appear along with poets working in conventional form; the writers of light verse complement their more serious kin; many neglected figures are given their due . . .

Why cannot we do the same broad including when it comes to religion? Religion has its experimentalists too, its neglected figures, its "small but pure talents." They all belong in the picture if it is to portray religion as a whole. Who would ever think of limiting the title of poet to those who happen to write in iambic pentameter? Yet this is what we do when we fence religion inside the concept of a deity.

What we tend at times to forget is that, if we want to guarantee freedom and dignity for our own variety of faith, we have to extend that freedom and dignity to all other varieties—not merely to exist, but to consider themselves religious if they care to do so. We have to resist the well-meaning effort to narrow religion down to include only the established, conventional forms of religion. This takes some doing, for we all slide, even the most liberal of us, into the habit of regarding ourselves, our way of

belief, as standard for all the rest of mankind.

Be our own faith ever so important to us, it is but one of many among the faiths of mankind, it is but one path to the ultimate truth that none knows in full. Religion is an immensely broad and ancient endeavor, and the human heart that conceives it has many hungers and many hopes. No matter how central some beloved belief may be in our own outlook, so that we cannot imagine anyone or any faith getting along without it, we can yet be reasonably certain that somewhere there are men and women as sincere in heart and as devoted in purpose who do manage to get along without it.

For what, after all, is religion? This is the crux of the whole matter. Is religion believing in Jesus or Mohammed? Yes, it is this to many, but it is yet more. Is it following the sacred book of law, the *New Testament*, the *Torah*, the *Koran*, the *Book of Mormon*, *Science and Health*? Yes, religion is this to a great many, but it is still more than this. Is religion the lighting of candles on an altar, is it the burial of the dead with food beside them, is it abstaining from luxuries in Lent or from meat on Fridays? Is religion attending church, or worshipping all female bovines as sacred? Yes, to some people somewhere, every

one of these is a vital part of religion, sometimes the all-in-all of religion. Yet, however sacred this book or that temple, however devout this belief or that practice, it is religion only to a part of the people of this vast and many-minded humanity of ours. No creed or formula, no code of conduct or set of commandments can possibly embrace the whole broad, deep, infinitely varied devotion of the heart that is included in the religions of mankind—and it is this devotion, this aspiring of the heart toward the highest that men know, that we must hold in mind, for this devotion, this aspiring of the heart is the essence of what religion is.

We need not make an abstruse difficulty of defining religion, for in its broadest being at least it is simple. Let us always remember that everywhere and in all times, what appeals to a person as of highest worth in his life, and calls forth his active devotion, is that person's religion, call it what he may. For some, the highest reality that captures loyalty will be seen as a force of nature, a spirit, or a personal god, or a universal mind operating through nature. For

some, it will not be any single entity, but the all-embracing whole of life, of Nature, of the Universe. For some, it will be simply the goodness they sense in man, or the beauty they find in the world.

A man may organize what he values most highly into a church or a cult, or he may not. He may nurture it in the privacy of his own mind, or he may share it with a chosen few of his like-minded fellows. He may build it into a gospel for evangelizing the world, like Christianity; or he may make it into a secular creed for conquering and ruling the world, like Communism. Whatever, in his variety, he does with it; however he conceives of it, and with whatever details of belief and practice he furnishes it, if it sums up for him his highest values and purposes, and if he devotes himself in active living to it, then it is his religion, and should be respected as such in law and in opinion. No court, no church, no man of different faith can say with truth that it is not religion to him.

Let us be most reluctant to fence religion in—for some day the faith shut out may be our own!



# Esthetics and Worship\*

V. OGDEN VOGT

ESTHETIC values will be the concern of the normal church. Where one man thinks, a thousand men feel. Behind the long history of the arts are the vast forms and movements of the human emotions. These are primitive and elemental, they cannot be quashed, they can be refined and directed. Ideas are made powerful by powerful symbols, projects draw adherence by their vivid presentments, order and integrity of spirit are aided by noble designs in music or architecture or other arts. The impulse to beauty is so deep and universal that it must perforce be woven into the fabric of man's religion.

Religion is not primarily a matter of the arts any more than primarily a matter of beliefs, but is rather primarily worship. Faiths and beliefs help religious experience and by religious experience are confirmed or changed. The arts help religious experience and by religious experience arts are utilized and developed. The emphasis on worship is not chiefly a matter of the arts at all. It only looks that way, because

public worship requires words or songs or other symbols for communication and for expressing outwardly those inner actions of the spirit which comprise worship.

Respecting the esthetic experience and its integration with religion, only two further comments are noted. The first is the necessity for all esthetic expression to follow canons that are the same for all the arts. These are unity, movement, rhythm, style, proportion, and design. Especially are these laws necessary to the primary art of public worship if its forms and usages are to be helpful for the inner actions of the spirit. Whether ritual actions be in the style of the Friends Meeting, positive silence followed by considerations, concerns and consensus for commitments, or in using the liturgy of the Prayer Book, they are in part effective because they obey these canons.

It is amazing to read now and again of the movement to improve the forms of Protestant worship as a movement "to enrich the service." For the past thirty years several writers have inveighed against precisely that. The first canon of the arts is not enrichment but simplicity. The techniques of

\*Portion of a chapter from *The Primacy of Worship*, by V. Ogden Vogt, soon to be published by the Beacon Press.

liturgics are difficult and exacting. They require careful analysis and disciplined training. If the chemists and physicists and engineers employed by big business corporations were as ill prepared for their allotted tasks as are ministers for the conduct of worship, we should have no modern industry at all.

Critical also is the dearth of concrete materials for public worship. Divinity schools might well offer annual prizes for compositions of hymns and litanies to express the powerful faiths and vital concerns of free religion today. Before too long there should appear new hymn and service books with a large variety of texts for the minister and for congregational participation. Already, notable collections of non-Biblical writings are available for scripture lessons of moving spiritual value.

Religion always has convictions and faiths and projects of good. These are often considered and reconsidered in sessions where men reason together. They should also be given warmth and clarity and beauty by poetry and song and ritual celebration until they become the comfort and joy of the common man, his comfortable trust, his joyous commitment.

If religion is to be more than coldly intellectual, either as traditional beliefs or radical speculations, it needs works of art, both

to be symbols of ideas and to stand in themselves as immediate presentations of good.

The other comment relates to the value of the arts as intimating the alternation of attention between the One and the many, between the universal and the manifold of factors that make up everyday life.

The most important symbol is that of unity, the representation of integrity and holiness, the intimation of divinity. The church building itself may be the best symbol of unity. It can be so designed as to assist withdrawal from common affairs and the turning of attention towards God. In some way, it should be stark and austere, to demand honesty. It should strip the soul naked. It should say: You may lie to yourself somewhere else, but not here.

This is a difficult assignment for the architect. Many new buildings in the contemporary mode are admirable, especially those which surpass the average American church in this note of severity. They have achieved a structural tone which at once carries an intimation of holiness. Others have been designed in such a way as not to afford a ready grasp of their structural stability and wholeness, and so fail to impart integrity. Still others of better structure have employed interior

shapes and colors which are those of everyday life. They take you right back to the house or hotel where you came from almost as effectively as pictures of beds and bath tubs.

Early American churches, Friends meeting houses, and thousands of similarly plain buildings were symbols of withdrawal from common affairs to the attentions and concerns of the sabbath day. Buildings of modern design, large or small, may also have the unity of structure and austerity of tone needed to represent the wholeness of the world and call for the integrity of persons.

The other most effective symbol of unity is a central altar or communion table. More than any other object, it indicates a holy place, a place of religious experience and action, the presence of God and the self-offering of man. It may have upon it an ever-burning lamp or candlelights or flowers or a cross, or be marked as standing before a background with figures or striking colors.

The use of the cross has greatly increased among Protestants, but is still controversial. In general it is wise not to use objects as symbols if they confuse more than they clarify meanings. It were better not to use the cross at all if it signifies a benefit received more than a spirit to be imitated.

It does mean a benefit received, but the blessing cannot be truly received except as a spirit imitated. A cross in a church may say to some: Here is a place where you cannot even rejoice until first you have taken account of the dark evils and sufferings of the world. Or it may say: Here is a place where we shall try to keep our religion free of those rigid legalisms which sent Jesus to the cross. If a congregation has learned such meanings, it might wish to use the symbol, but never blatantly and never in the manner of a decoration. Liberal churches, on the other hand, would probably prefer to use the simpler symbols of flowers or lights as being more easily read by all.

The house of worship itself, in its structural clarity and by its interior composition, may become the most effective symbol of unity and the most potent call to worship that religion can devise.

Unity can have little significance except as it gives order to the manifold. In the average or small building, the recollection of common affairs must be largely a matter of the imagination. It is in any case difficult to represent the many concerns of practical life without developing a multiplicity of forms which divide attention and prevent the achievement of integrity and wholeness. Those

who plan larger buildings may be able to symbolize a considerable range of life concerns, and still not challenge the overall mastery of the structural design.

In almost any church building, there may be placed something to represent the world of the many, that manifold of ideas and natural structures and human affairs which are given their complete harmony only in religion, because their complete unity is only in God. If it is too difficult to represent them by figures carved or painted or designed in glass, there might at least be placed upon the walls of the church the solemn and challenging words: *Truth—Goodness—Beauty*. The Spirit of Beauty is one of these religious absolutes because always it is in itself the effort to bring multiple factors of existence into harmony and wholeness.

The normal American church does now have in actuality, ideas and ethics and arts. In the norm of the future, these elements will be more clearly recognized, the

incompleteness of each acknowledged, and all held as open to the light of new revelations. They will not be regarded as final beliefs or projects but as living faiths and purposes ever renewed or revised by the perpetual activities of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Goodness, and the Spirit of Beauty.

These elemental mandates of truth and goodness and beauty are deep in the nature of man. They are the primary drives of the greatest men. From them flow the highest activities of the human race. Their separate pursuits are often in conflict or incomplete. None can stand alone, each requires the others. It is only in religion that they are harmonized, it is only in religion that they are carried to their ultimate ends of accord with the Final Powers. The complete action which effects this mergence and universality is the activity of worship. As primary in religion it is at once the noblest duty and most sublime joy of men.

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### Some Future Articles of Interest

Humanistic Theology.....	By Gardner Williams
Dogma Is Its Own Enemy—A Series.....	By Sunder Joshi
The London Humanist Congress.....	By Alfred Stiernotte
A Biological Basis for Humanism.....	By Leo F. Koch

# The Current Increase of Religion and Bad Conduct

JOHN MALICK

**S**TATISTICS show considerable increase of interest in religion and in the number of wrongdoers, all levels. The growth of one does not seem to affect the other. In fact, they seem unrelated. This relation between popular religion and current morality ought to give somebody pause enough to examine the connection between them. Liberals have a special responsibility here. They have the only real test of wrongdoing, the hurt done, the number affected, and the extent of it. The effects of a redemptive religion begin to show up. Saved by the blood, from primitive pouring on to the most decorous churches, does not seem to encourage good conduct. The full salvation can be had without it. Christian theology leaves ethics functioning in a vacuum. There is no reason to be careful. It seems that people generally are finding out that the religion around them really makes no ethical demands. Witness conduct at the labor level, most of them fully saved by Christian theology. Witness crime increase from youth up through the hoodlum level to the white

collar crowd. See *Life's* recent article on crime at the free-going white collar level.

There seems to be agreement that morality has lost its word of command. With the decline of the old scareheads and restraints: taboo, respect for parents and the dead; eternal incarceration, hell, there is nothing left to be afraid of. Conduct at the international level is made just what it is by faithful Christian believers in the West and by equally faithful believers in the other religions around the planet. Traditionally, religion claims to be the authority for and the keeper of morality. The present situation poses a new problem for all believers in all religions who think that keeping up their religion will keep the world straight. Interest in religion and its observances is at the peak. Statistics on bad conduct keep pace with increased church attendance. There is no ethical religion as a mouthpiece on the air and in the press comparable in popular appeal to Sheenism, Pealeism and Grahamism, neither of which concerns itself with the kind of morality based on what hurts most

people most.

The recent defeat of Proportional Representation, known as PR, in Cincinnati and racial conduct in the South are on the point, and call for comment. PR is only a method of voting but its proved effectiveness gives it real moral tone. By experience it is one way, really the only way, to take a city out of the hands of profiting politicians and return it to the people: City political machines are about the only opposition. PR gives group representation in City Council according to their number and prevents a minority having the whole Council, leaving many, often a majority, without representation. Cincinnati was noted for its culture, called the "Athens of the West," and was notorious for its corruption. The city was run as private business. Present estates in the city bear witness to how profitable it was. Political leaders starting with nothing acquired wealth very quickly.

Here was a church-city, conspicuously so, of earnest believers who took their theology straight and seriously. The city had had one of the most widely publicized heresy trials of the century. Then the city took itself out of its bad condition and went along for over thirty years with good government. The change was evident in

every home, on every street, in every public service. PR was the way of choosing Councilmen all this time. Then after a half-dozen efforts it was defeated. This does not necessarily mean going all the way back to the wallow. It does mean that it is a step on the way back toward putting the city again in the hands of a fanatically partisan crowd. It makes possible a minority having the whole Council including the Mayor. Out of this experience of reform and return to the old condition have come two axioms bearing on municipal affairs: a city cannot be *bad* enough to enlist all the clergy and all the churches in protest against it, and in reform it cannot be *good* enough to enlist all religionists for the better.

The churches always had great interest in the smaller sizes of wrongdoing. Periodically, they worked themselves into a dither about drink, licenses, closing hours, prostitution, solicitation on the streets, red light district, all sex deviations, in fact; in bingo and pinball machines, every form of taking a chance on anything. A corrupt city hurts more people more than all these smaller evils put together about which the churches always were so much excited. Their combined effect was not a circumstance to the social hurt from corrupt city govern-

ment about which the churches never became disturbed. That is, churches did have interest in wrongdoing but it was not in the kind that did the most damage.

The crux of city corruption is doing wrong with the vote. The church code of wrongdoing came largely from writings and social ways before people had the vote. They could not do wrong with it before they had it. Historically, it was impossible for misuse of the vote to be in the church code. Most of the bad actors in corrupting cities have been faithful believers in Christian theology and faithful church attendance. Often enough they were quite free from the smaller vices the churches are troubled so much about. Some of the worst of them had good reputations at home and at church. The place of women was in the home. They did not go to the places where men gathered to deal with city affairs. Women at home suffered most from the bad conditions. They did not know what their men did away from home nor how they made their money.

Morality acquired a new dimension when people were given the vote. With it people had for the first time an instrument with which to do larger wrongs than their kind ever could have done before. Those who corrupted American cities were for the most part nov-

ices in wrongdoing. Never before manipulating the vote had this group ever had enough place or influence to do much harm. Running American cities gave them their first chance in history at large-sized wrongdoing and the big money. The churches did not extend their code to take in this new kind of wrongdoing with the vote. Churches always were quick to make any deviation "a moral issue." Both the clergy and the politicians were quick to cash in on any matter that they could make "a moral issue." The clergy did it to show that they were doing something useful and the politicians did it to make a reputation. Generally, the wrongs that churches made moral issues were small matters, some of them phony. The churches never made a moral issue of the really hurting kind of wrong, corrupting a city.

Church polity passed from all authority in the clergy, and none in the pews, to all authority in the pews and none in the clergy. Churches that could discipline their members guilty of undermining cities, did not do so. Such churches had a large share of those who hurt cities most. Churches that have their clergy controlled by the pews, under contract, were powerless to discipline their guilty members. Those responsible for the city's

condition were scattered here and there over the city in Protestant churches. The clergy had to be silent and neutral while they shared the loot.

Integration publishes again the wide gap between religion and morals. The South has the most fanatical believers in Christian theology in this country and is appraised as one of the most "religious" places in the world. Christian theology had an early start in the South and made a theological bloc before there was a political bloc. Most of the population are "saved" persons by local rating. Liberalism was almost completely driven out.

Slavery, any kind, is first magnitude evil measured by the harm done. American slavery was a peculiarly vicious kind measured by the extent of it at the time and its aftermath. When most people were slaves they shared quite fully in the general life of the time and the place. Once set free they passed into the general population without prejudice. Their former slave status did not follow them to their hurt. Slaves in the United States could not pass into the general population when set free. Being black, they always carried the badge of their former servitude. Slaves in the South did not share in the general life of the time as they did in

Athens. American slaves were denied variety of interesting work. Slaves before often had ranked their masters in manual and intellectual skills. In the South slaves were profitable only for raising cotton and tobacco. This was the lowest and hardest form of labor. Black slaves to do the work bred a white proletariat to whom work was a disgrace. Cotton and tobacco wore out the land very quickly. To keep the system going, new land had to be found all the time. The white proletariat furnished the ruffians to help take over the new slave territory. The logic of slavery in the South was that the old worn-out slave states would become in time only a breeding ground for raising slaves for the new territory.

All this, with the way Christian nations had carried on the slave trade, made slavery a first rank evil with no close second. The aftermath was correspondingly large and bad. For the same people to be the most faithful religionists in the country and supporters of the worst evil, measured by harm done, posed a problem for both religionists and moralists. In the case of city corruption the clergy never got their first magnitude evil within their moral code. You could be a guilty corruptionist in city affairs and at the same time a saved religionist

in the churches. The striking part about the news from the South is that those said to be the judges and keepers of morality are not in the picture at all. The worst that anti-racialists can do, which certainly is bad enough, is *not* enough to enlist all the clergy in opposition. After all other community forces — political, educational, and military — have acted, the clergy are asked to do something about it. They offer prayer. They find excuse enough in their Bible and in their theology to justify their staying out of it. True, the Bible never has been much help in branding slavery or in making private consciences against it. Christian theology never has helped either. It is concerned with its redemptive scheme for saving individuals. It can save fully in spite of what the saved do about black people or anything else.

Most people's only interest in religion is that they believe that it alone can assure another chance at life after this. Practically, it would help the situation if we had a religion in our midst that would make this second chance, salvation, depend upon right conduct rather than upon right theology. We have no such religion of any force or general acceptance. Liberals do have an ethical reli-

gion, but they have no scheme of salvation. They believe in all kinds of salvation except the church kind and have no lost souls here or elsewhere. The ethical groups in our midst, not tied in with some quick salvation scheme, are relatively small. The large religious groups meet the popular demand for all the benefits of religion, now or later, without the handicap of a master voice in ethics. The record-breaking soul saver of our generation cries "Guilty, Guilty" to get them started up the aisle but he does not mean the really sizable wrong-doers. They are never disturbed.

All this raises the question whether it is better to support the major world religions or to help them fade out of the picture. The hot trouble spots seem to be just where all these religions give the people the reason why they do most that they do, much of it of no credit to them, and certainly no help toward "One World." Bertrand Russell has just reaffirmed his conviction that all the major religions have creeds not based on fact. The universe, as it has been found to be, does not act for or against man as these creeds say. For this reason Lord Russell thinks that their influence historically and at present is on the debit side.

# BOOKMAN'S NOTEBOOK

CHARLES W. PHILLIPS

## WHAT IS SCIENCE?

We agree heartily with the editor's comment, (apropos of one of ours) in the last UNITY, to the point that ministers particularly should try to talk the language of laymen, and get into terms they understand. It is true that jargon may not mean precision, but only be a means of covering up fuzzy thinking. We trust it is no necessary qualification on this, however, to take for granted that both lay and cleric are going to have to do a lot of work, really, to come to terms with this age of science, each side for itself and in order that effective communication can take place between them. There will have to be some new words and technical concepts learned, but perhaps not so much of these, as habits of clarity, consistency, and critical thinking, themselves a legacy of scientific development. If not, we may not improve religion any and may debase science.

Both by way of giving ourselves a text on this, and introducing a good book to you, we would quote Erwin Schrodinger, a Nobel prize-winner in physics, from his essay "Science and Humanism" contained in *What Is Life? and Other Scientific Essays* (Paperback, Doubleday Anchor, \$.95) :

For there is always a certain time-lag between the views held by learned men and the views held by the general public about the views of those learned men. I do not think that fifty years

is an excessive estimate for the average length of that time-lag.

Be that as it may, the fifty years that have just gone by—the first half of the twentieth century—have seen a development of science in general, and of physics in particular, unsurpassed in transforming our Western outlook on what has often been called the Human Situation. I have little doubt that it will take another fifty years or so before the education section of the general public will have become aware of this change. Of course, I am not so much of an idealistic dreamer as to hope to substantially accelerate this process by a couple of public lectures. But, on the other hand, this process of *assimilation* is not automatic. *We have to labour for it.* In this labour I take my share, trusting that others will take theirs. It is part of our task in life. (Author's italics.)

If the gentle reader will re-read the immediately above for himself, it will save us words in reprinting it, and may achieve the emphasis upon which our approach here is predicated.

Our feeling of the best place to begin, or to refresh constantly if one has made a beginning, is the history of anything, in this case science. Here we commend first *A Shorter History of Science*, by William C. Dampier (Meridian Books, \$1.25). This paperback is

a short (176 pp.) but comparatively recently up-dated reduction of his older and much longer work on the same subject. This is a survey from pre-history, although of course the most of the book is taken up with the Renaissance on, a fair proportion owing to the late rise of significant science. It is a remarkably compact but complete book to give one a picture of the outstanding major discoveries and developments. There is a minimum of formulae and technical matter in it. This can be skipped and one can still have a feeling of what happened. What the compactness sacrifices is historical "thickness," a sense of the flesh and blood of false starts, conflicting theory, oddities of motivation, chance, wrong deductions from some results, the real usefulness of some wrong theory, *et cetera*. For that we have to go elsewhere, but the bird's-eye view, spacing off the milestones and simply giving their significance, is useful first.

If one will read one book—spending not too much time and only a little money—to get some feeling for the historical thickness, which we submit is essential to any kind of worthwhile generalizations about science, we recommend A. R. Hall's *The Scientific Revolution—1500-1800, The Formation of the Modern Scientific Attitude* (Beacon Paperback, \$1.75). Here, a much larger book deals with a much smaller cut of time (albeit a most significant period) and therefore gives much feeling for what was alluded to above. Even so, Hall can say: "From the bewildering variety of experience in its social, economic,

and psychological aspects it is possible to extract only a few factors here and there which have a bearing upon the development of science." Still it is a good job and *interesting* reading. One gets something of the romance and drama of the history, and therefore the possibility of absorbing, without dullness, some highly important understandings that not all sciences are affected equally, or at the same time, by the same historical factors; a sense of the interplay of conceptual imagination and manipulative ingenuity; the dual responses of revolt and borrowing from Greek beginnings earlier, and medieval ones more proximately; and more. Even though this book ends with the beginning of the nineteenth century, and has nothing in it obviously of the revolutionary developments beginning in the last five years of that century, it is highly useful for two things: (1) It gives the necessary feeling for historical texture, which once felt one may continue to look for, or be sensitive to, in other times and periods, and (2) the period dealt with was the prime underpinning of nineteenth century science. If Schrödinger is right, and we buy him, we have as yet hardly begun to assess and understand the radical trends from 1895 on. Worse than that we have an ill-digested jargon, applying, where it does at all, to the earlier period. This first has to become more accurate, both as it applies to its own locus and as a springboard to start on what comes after it.

There is actually a minimum of philosophy in Hall, but this again is something to work upon. Here

we recommend two books. The first is *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, by E. A. Burtt (Doubleday Anchor Paperback, \$.95). Although this paperback is comparatively recent, the original title was 1924, revised in 1932. To hear some people talk, one would think that science does not have any relation to metaphysics. Contemporary positivists may be asserting that now science does not, or need and should not. That is a separate issue for debate by itself. That it has had is a fact to be understood, along with the nature of the metaphysics it assumed. Einstein demonstrated that previous concepts of Space and Time were metaphysical. Newton seemed at times to think of himself more as a theologian than a scientist—to give only a few pointers. In any case, solution of, or any effective arguing within, the positivist debate will require an understanding of the terms and metaphysical connections of the previous development. Science, from the Renaissance to the end of the nineteenth century, built a new metaphysical structure of profound modification of both the Greek and the Scholastic. It revolved around ideas of reality, causality and the human mind. Reality became no longer a world of substances, but of atoms, or electrons with nothing but mathematical characteristics. Causality dropped teleological considerations and was understood in terms of mechanically treated motions of bodies. God dropped out as a Final Cause and, where retained, was an efficient First Cause. Mind became a combination of sensations or reactions, instead of a

group of scholastic faculties. All parts of this are now in a state of fluidity of conception in this century, but it is best understood upon the basis of something like the job Burtt does.

A second book we would recommend is *Science, Religion, and Reality*, edited by Joseph Needham. This was first published in 1925 and went out of print. It is now available in a recent edition of George Braziller at \$3.95. Immediately apropos of Burtt, we recommend the essay in this book, by Antonio Aliotta on "Science and Religion in the Nineteenth Century." It is a very good short outline. All of the other essays are of interest and value. Clement Webb's, on "Science, Christianity and Modern Civilization," is too easy a solution, for our taste, of the problems of rapprochement we now have, but it has a lot of value. The introduction by George Sarton, of Harvard University (a new introduction by the way for this reprint) is a very useful essay on definitions of science and religion, relation between them, science and theology, *et cetera*.

All of which starts leading into questions most people want to plunge into right away, and do, regardless of how much happier it would be to take a longer historical running start. What are the uses or disuses of science? Or what are the values and limitations? To us, at least, a good, irenic introduction to this is still J. W. N. Sullivan's *Limitations of Science* (Pelican books for about \$.35). The title should not mislead one to thinking the author does not find values nor extol them. He does, both in terms of the

"superb moral integrity" of it, a note more commonly sounded, and also in terms of its aesthetic values, less commonly denoted. The humanistic importance of science is fully credited. The limitations come from the fact that the greater the precision the narrower becomes the field, and that some aspects of reality as experienced do not yield themselves to quantitative methods. Science by itself is not adequate to the whole man. Whether accepted or not, his point of view can be appreciated just because it is not put in terms of, nor does it spring from, any reactionary religion or theology with some parochial axe to grind.

Of course we all desire to move into the assessment of the revolution of the last fifty years, where we are today, where science is going, and what kind of a religion is to adjust to it. There is a veritable flood of writing upon this, as there has been upon the areas we discussed above. There is no dearth of competent material in this field of science, even though we have not been having much education in it before Sputniks I and II. We will deal with more of it in future book pages. Suffice it here to quote from Burtt (*op. cit.*) and then refer to Schrodinger in other essays in the title cited by him. From Burtt:

Today new theories on each of these matters (reality, causality, mind) are in the making.

. . . In time, out of the clash of these theories will be created a new scientific conception of the world which may last as long, and dominate human thinking

as profoundly, as the great conception of the medieval period. . . . Yet it ought to be a prime lesson . . . that attempts to formulate this new viewpoint by the mere synthesis of scientific data or the logical criticism of its assumptions are bound to be inadequate in any case. It is of the first importance that they be supplemented by a sound insight into the major factors which have conditioned both the rise of the medieval metaphysic and of its mathematico-mechanical successor which is now seen by all thinkers to demand thorough critical overhauling. Without such insight, the new metaphysic when it arrives, will be but the objectification of the mood of an age, perhaps fitful and temporary, rather than the reasoned expression of the intellectual insight of all ages.

Positivism may be dominating at the moment as the new metaphysic (or anti-metaphysic). Schrodinger is one distinguished scientist and first-rate humanistic scholar, who would at least be cautious about this. His concluding essay on "The Spirit of Science" in the work cited is very fruitful. Here and in other essays, he points up the great difficulties caused by our complete lack, as yet, of an adequate theory of mind. This and other problems deserve a separate treatment of their literature. We forewent that and "Books in Brief" this time to make the emphasis we did, but will try to pick up a point or two at a time in succeeding pages.

# Western Unitarian Conference

700 Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago 15, Illinois

ELLSWORTH M. SMITH, *Executive Secretary*

## Things a Unitarian Wonders About

A few years ago when I was the minister of a Unitarian Church I got out a one-question questionnaire in which I stated: "When Unitarianism began in this country there were very definite things that Unitarians stood for. What should be the causes for which Unitarians carry the torch today?" Out of sixty-nine replies, there were thirty-eight different "causes" suggested. A Unitarian minister might wonder how to lead a group of sixty-nine people who have thirty-eight different ideas of what is most important. One could get into the state of the bewhiskered grandpa who, asked by a child whether he slept with his whiskers on top the covers or tucked underneath, couldn't get to sleep that night!

A young man, new to, and entranced by, Unitarianism in general nevertheless heatedly protested: "Why is it that Unitarians, so different in their practice of religion in most ways, cannot think of any more Unitarian way to raise money than the Methodists use?" One could wonder about that. After all, we do a great deal of experimenting in forms of worship to find something peculiarly satisfying; we experiment with making the sermon a more democratic process, sometimes by having what fellowship people call "sermon talk-backs"

and sometimes by getting a group together to create the sermon. We have our own special non-judgmental basis for church membership. Can we devise a non-typical way of raising money? I have heard of some attempts that show much promise, and, yes, they derive from a basic sense of Unitarian philosophy. And they do not discard the notion that Unitarians, like all other people, have a need to give—they simply generate the dynamics from within the group, by the group, in an unformalized way, and they pay attention to the undoubted fact that Unitarians are very careful in the placing of their hopes and confidences. The United Appeal and the Unitarians who are professional fund-raisers are getting their heads together and asking themselves some pretty basic questions along these lines.

Many a fellowship tells a minister who is about to visit or a theological student coming for a weekend: "We do not particularly want a worship service." There be some who say that the fellowships need to acquire a "sense of worship." One wonders two things: "What is worship, anyway?" and "Could it be the fellowships are right and the churches wrong in their sense of the Unitarian meaning of religion?" Or, if these questions are too blunt, then: "What is there about wor-

ship that is important to the non-traditional Unitarian?" and "Do we lose something that requires freshness and critical alertness when we repeat regularly the familiar forms and seek over and over the familiar feeling?" Just wondering!

Talked one day to a group of Unitarian ministers about extension. One asked: "Are you really that anxious about numbers?" What would you answer? Makes one examine his values and his motives. It is a bit too easy to say we all like success and numbers. Do we really want to have more Unitarians because we want more people to enjoy what we enjoy? Do we really believe so profoundly that we are right, or approximately right, that we think most, if not all, people should become Unitarians? Are we empire builders, after all? One wonders. Certainly the opposite attitude is not too lovely, to want to remain "the Lord's sweet chosen few"! We laugh today about the minister of one of our churches years ago who kept the membership at thirty-five (when someone died the Trustees met to decide whom to invite!). Our health today is probably based in no small measure on the fact that all kinds of people are today Unitarian, not just a select group, as was so often the case in the past. In today's Unitarian churches working people laugh with corporation executives and social workers. Do we want to grow in order that there may be more people to pay the bills? Probably each of us wonders in his own categories, on his own terms. For myself, I have learned the self-esteem that goes with gen-

uine freedom, and I want as many others to share it as possible.

Finally, will Unitarians ever get down to the completely simple business of experimentally living their religion and quit verbalizing it to shreds? I wonder!

Since it has been shown that animals feeding from grasses alongside a river that has "safe, low levels of radioactivity" have developed 1000 times more concentrated radioactivity in their bones, is it not a bit naive to wonder *how* polluted the air must be to be dangerous to the humans that breathe it? Is it not time we learned how to make effective protest? To trust the "safeness" of the low amount of radioactivity in the air at any one place at any one time would seem to be playing a very dangerous "numbers" game. "Wherever there is calcium in a living organism, there radioactive particles will accumulate without limit." (I got this from a public address given by a government scientist.)

Should a social action, or social responsibility, committee be a voluntary group within the church speaking only for itself, or should it be an integral part of the church organizational structure with the implication that the entire church becomes on frequent occasions a social responsibility organism? This question is being threshed out in several series of neighborhood and congregational meetings by the members of the First Unitarian Society of Denver. The prime question underlying this organizational problem is: "Shall the church commit itself by vote to act on the five principles of Unitarian Advance?" and

defend these principles, when threatened, in civic and national life?

#### News Items

Western Conference Unitarians are going to have a weekend Summer Assembly at Estes Park, Colorado, August 22-25. Those who attend from afar will be invited home by the Rocky Mountain natives, who will then take them as their guests to see the choice scenic spots.

An L.R.Y. session will be included in the Rocky Mountain Assembly. The L.R.Y. Camp in northeastern Indiana, at Camp Limberlost, will then be for the eastern end of the Western Conference. We are getting involved here: "Are you going to the eastern Western L.R.Y. or the western Western?"

The newly re-constituted Western Conference Committee on Fellowships met recently for two days in Chicago. It was a real working conference that found so many things to do that the Committee set as its first task to describe some limit to its goals. What really stirs the adrenalin of the committee members are the stories of new fellowships springing up spontaneously here and there, proving that Unitarianism has the robust qualities of a healthy perennial!

The Executive Committee of the Conference became concerned about the problems involved in Unitarian administration in the Western Conference in which six of the eight sub-regional organizations are Unitarian-Universalist. A full-scale meeting of a sub-committee of four will go into the matter thoroughly and recom-

mend action to the Board of Directors. The members of the Program Planning Committee, representing the sub-regions, talked long and hard and could find no serious problems to worry about. Certainly we must be free to operate as Unitarians. Somehow we have been getting the job done without difficulty, and there is no desire on anyone's part to limit the Uni-Uni nature of our relationships. Where there is the kind of mutual good will that exists between Unitarians and Universalists all over our region, ways are readily found.

The experimental Western Conference newsletter, to be called *The Western Unitarian*, has been written and is in the hands of the offset printer. We hope you will like it, and offer your comments and suggestions. We expect a rash of questions about "When is West west?" and "How east can West be?" In this case, history is the oracle.

Four excellent men, in their thirties and forties, well-established in other vocations, have talked with me about the possibilities either of starting over as Unitarian ministers or of becoming (forgive the term!) lay preachers. I am interested in getting their reasons for wanting to work for Unitarian extension and development. They must be good ones to justify a willingness to make so drastic and costly a re-orientation of their lives and in the living of their families.

With the shortage of Unitarian ministers becoming steadily more acute and with the fellowships generally by natural development humanist-oriented, where shall